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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 002960

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SUBJECT: USG TRAINING PROVIDES FATA LEVIES WITH INCREASED
SKILLS, ENHANCED PROFESSIONALISM

REF: PESHAWAR 00226

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Through a joint State/INL and Justice/ICIPTAP program, the Mission continues to offer police training to the Levy forces, who are the primary law enforcement arm of the Political Agents in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). On 21 November, 25 Levies graduated from the 13th iteration of this training, which includes basic police skills and human rights courses. The inability of the Political Agents to deliver more than 25 (out of a reported 6,785) Levies for training reflects both the disorganization of the force and the need for their services in daily security operations. Prime Minister Gilani has authorized and partially funded an increase of at least 2,500 Levies (the Army wants to recruit up to 5,000 for South Waziristan alone), which the GOP claims will eventually take over from the Frontier Corps as "the" hold force for the FATA. To accomplish this now distant goal, the Levies will need better organization, leadership, equipment, barracks, and training appropriate to current security conditions. After consultation with Pakistani civilian and military leaders, the Mission will report septel on proposals for the USG to enhance our support for the Levies. End Summary.

What is a Levy?

12. (SBU) The Levy force is the principal day-to-day law enforcement and principal security element in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Levies are drawn from the local tribes, but are selected by and report to the Political Agent in each of Pakistan's seven FATA agencies. They are generally under-paid, under-educated or illiterate, under-trained, and under-equipped.

13. (SBU) The present Levy force in Pakistan evolved from the Colonial British practice of conscripting local tribesmen into a security force and dates back to the 1890s; the British military commander (later the Home Secretary) made this force responsible for maintaining order. In Malakand and Dir, there have been continuous Levy forces since the 1890s. In the FATA, Levies are a development as recent as the 1990s. A conscripted hereditary tribal police force called the Khassadars originally provided security and basic police services in the FATA. Several FATA agencies now have both Levies and Khassadars, who report to the PA.

14. (SBU) Levies are reportedly present in every agency of

the FATA as well as in parts of Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). In areas outside the FATA, the Levies supplement the local police and report to the Inspector General of the Province. Within the FATA, the Levies are intended to be the only permanent law enforcement entity, as the Khassadars are phased out (REFTEL), but they are not yet a deployable force. Their primary responsibilities include manning checkpoints, establishing perimeter security or a picket, and responding to criminal events. In responding to a crime, one of two judicial mechanisms is used depending on the proximity of the event to an officially administered area. Crimes committed in a village or city may be adjudicated by the Political Agent, while crimes committed in a less-administered or tribal area may be handled by a tribal jirga. The focus tends to be on making the victim whole through community involvement rather than on punishing the accused.

15. (SBU) The Levy force has a hierarchical rank structure and is very bottom heavy, though investigative responsibility for all crimes tends to be held by the Commandant. Below the Commandant are the Subedar Major, Sudedar, Naib Subedar, Havaladar, Naik, Lance Naik, and the Sepoy; Sepoys, sometimes called Constables, represent about 90% of the force. The Commandant reports to and takes his orders from the Political Agent or his Assistant.

16. (SBU) The Political Agents of each FATA agency claim to fully train and equip the Levies, though the Levies themselves report that they receive only cursory training, light-arms (bolt-action rifles), and summer uniforms. They

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are responsible for providing any supplementary gear that they may require. Formal training (focused on shooting, drills, ambushes, and raids) has periodically been provided to the Levies by the Frontier Corps-NWFP (FC-NWFP), but has not taken place in an organized fashion since 2005. More recent GoP-provided courses have taken place in an ad hoc manner on the battle field and focused on skills such as weapons handling, physical fitness, field craft, ambush, road patrolling, cordon-and-search operations, and convoy movement.

17. (SBU) Previous Government of Pakistan reports indicated 6,785 total Levies in FATA (1,524 in Bajaur, 500 in Mohmand, 1,074 in Kurram, 500 in Khyber, 1,387 in Orazaki, 900 in North Waziristan, and 900 in South Waziristan). Members of the current graduating class, however, reported 1,800 Levies in Bajaur, 500 in Khyber and 650 in North Waziristan. (Note: The Narcotics Affairs Section suspects that 25-50% of these Levies are ghost employees and exist only on paper. As threats to the force increased over the past two years, many Levies quit. However, the PAs continued to report the previous figures. End note.)

18. (C) The individuals that join the Levy Force are typically under-educated. In a recent conversation with Emboffs, several Levies stated that if they had more education, they would not have joined. Although some Levies are illiterate, many of those that attended the most recent training course demonstrated both literacy and aptitude, as well as claimed formal education into their teenage years. Nevertheless, critical thinking remains a challenge and instructors report that many of the Levies struggled to correctly apply a general concept in a different context.

USG Training Provides Basic Police Skills, Increases Confidence

19. (SBU) On 21 November, 25 Levies graduated from a month-long police training course. This was the 13th iteration of training funded by the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and implemented by the Department of Justice's ICITAP Program.

The current training regimen began in July 2008 and has graduated over 350 students. It began as a three-week course and was lengthened to four weeks at the request of the FATA Secretary for Law and Order. Each Political Agent nominates Levies from their Agency to attend training. Although there is broad agreement that unit training is needed, it has historically been difficult for more than a handful of Levies from each Agency to be released at a time due to ongoing operations in the FATA.

¶10. (SBU) For many of the students, this course is the first real opportunity to interact with Americans, as well as receive formal training. According to the instructors, the Levies are initially apprehensive, but quickly warm up to the professionalism and candor of the trainers. On the first day, they are told that politics and religion will not be discussed during the course, and that all instruction presented will adhere to international law enforcement standards, not the standards of any one particular nation.

¶11. (SBU) During the course, the Levies are provided with a hands-on, practical approach to the subject material. The four-week course covers basic policing skills including weapons handling and safety, pre-attack indicators, contact and cover, patrolling, checkpoint design and operation, vehicle search, raid operations, first responder and first aid, and how to identify and respond to improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers. In order to provide continuous reinforcement, human rights is taught as part of every topic. The training regimen is similarly hands-on and includes regular physical fitness as well as defensive tactics when unarmed. These empty-hand tactics are particularly significant, as they teach the Levies how to respond proportionally to a threat and impress upon them that not all responses need to be lethal. A lack of confidence in selecting the correct response sometimes prevents the Levies from responding; they report being removed from duty without pay while the Political Agent

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reviews incidents for wrongdoing.

¶12. (SBU) The instructors strongly encourage the Levies to share what they learn. Some students report that their friends who previously received the training shared their skills. This cascade training, while informal, improves the skills and has raised the interest of other Levies in seeking out access to the course.

Levies Desire to be Professionalized

¶13. (C) In a conversation with Emboffs, the Levies indicated a desire to be professionalized as a police force. In particular, they seek a salary commensurate with their duties and risk; a Levy with five years on the job receives 5,000 Rupees (approximately \$60 USD) a month. The top complaint articulated by the Levies is the lack of government interest in incentivizing or providing for their needs; they called for a formal system that recognizes their commitment to local security, to include death benefits for the families of those killed while on duty. They claimed that young people are not interested in joining the Levies as the benefits do not outweigh the risk, and asserted that the youth of today would prefer unemployment to under-employment with the Levies. Other complaints included a lack of support from the Political Agent. The Levies stated that they are insufficiently armed to meet the threat; some are issued AK-47s, but many rely on their personal weapons vice a bolt-action or substandard issued rifle for use while on duty and have to buy ammunition and other gear, such as boots and cold-weather items, out of pocket.

¶14. (C) Comment: The Levies participating in this course were engaged, motivated, forthcoming, and articulate. They finished the class with additional knowledge, enhanced

skills, increased professionalism, and a positive view of the U.S. that came from having spent four weeks working side by side with American instructors. One Levy commented that the U.S. trainers cared for and respected them as sons or brothers; he only wished their leaders would do the same. End Comment.
PATTERSON